

## **Volunteers needed to support Topsfield's Local Access Cable TV**

Topsfield Cable TV viewers are missing out on some important local news because of a lack of volunteers to record public meetings and community events. Examples of uncovered events include:

- A special informational session regarding proposed changes to the Water Restriction Bylaw was held prior to the 2008 Town Meeting.
- This spring the Board of Health presented a panel discussion entitled, Mosquito Control: In your Backyard and Your Community.
- Several school plays and concerts were held throughout the year at Steward and Proctor Schools.
- The Topsfield Historical Society hosted a series of presentation of interest to people concerning local history.
- The Town Library sponsored a series of events including concerts, lectures and demonstrations.
- Local community events such as the Strawberry Festival, the Memorial Day Parade, the Holiday Walk, etc. were not broadcast.

Unlike most community's Cable TV operations which have formed private corporations to manage local programming and hire full-time professional staff, Topsfield's Cable TV operations are handled by an all-volunteer group and a part-time employee who works 10 hours a week to support both local cable as well as the Town website. The obvious benefit to Topsfield is reduced costs that impact rates. The downside is the need to depend upon volunteers.

Although Topsfield does not have a studio to create programming or have formal training in video production, we believe that there are residents with camcorders and home computers with video editing software who could, with a little encouragement, produce simple local programming.

The Cable Advisory Committee is seeking people who will help cover Selectmen Meetings and School Committee Meetings – a great way to keep current with what is going on in town. If people have their own equipment, we are looking for volunteers to cover other community events.

If someone is interested in leaning more about how local cable programming happens and would like to be a “back-up” for the Cable TV / Website Coordinator, there is the possibility of a paid “job sharing” position.

These volunteer opportunities might well appeal to someone who is young and interested in video technology or is retired and looking for a way to make a contribution to the community. Computer technical skills are not a requirement.

The Town will be upgrading the cable TV broadcast infrastructure to an Internet-based system that can be updated from home.

Please contact Bill Whiting (978-887-2283) or E-Mail [cable@topsfield-ma.gov](mailto:cable@topsfield-ma.gov) for more information.